THE

CHILDREN OF THE KINGDOM.

A Sermon

PREACHED AT THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION,

IN PHILADELPHIA, MAY 24, 1863.

BY

REV. CHARLES S. ROBINSON,

PASTOR OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, BROOKLYN, N. Y.

THE AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION.

1. This is the only NATIONAL MISSIONARY SOCIETY having a special mission to the neglected children of our country.

2. It is a union, not of denominational organizations, as such, but of individuals of every name.

3. It carefully preserves the Union principle in all its operations, propagating only those essential truths of our holy religion which are held in common by the entire Christian Church.

4. The affairs of the Society are supervised and directed by a Board of thirty-six Managers, with a President and other officers. In selecting these, care is taken that the various evangelical denominations are represented.

Two Grand Objects.

1st. TO ORGANIZE A SUNDAY-SCHOOL WHEREVER THERE IS A POPULATION.

2d. TO PUBLISH AND CIRCULATE MORAL AND RELIGIOUS PUBLICATIONS.

These two objects constitute two separate departments,—Missionary and Publication,—which are distinct in their finances and management.

Publication Department.

The Committee of Publication consists of twelve members from at least four different denominations of Christians; and not more than three can be from any one denomination. *Nothing can be printed, published, or sold by the Society, or at their expense, to which any member of the Committee shall object.* The department sustains itself by the profits on its sales, and so arranges the prices of its books as merely to enlarge its operations as occasions may require.

Publications.

The whole number of the Society's publications exceeds fifteen hundred. It has been the uniform aim of the Committee to make its publications vehicles of saving truth. It issues two periodicals,—the SUNDAY-SCHOOL WORLD, monthly, for teachers and parents, and the CHILD'S WORLD, for children.

Facts to be Considered.

1st. That there is a loud call for missionary labour, and that the instrumentalities employed by the American Sunday-School Union are *efficient*, and meet with popular favour and the divine sanction.

2d. That the demand for Sunday-School missionary labour is not confined to any section of the country. FROM MAINE TO MEXICO, SUNDAY-SCHOOL MISSIONARIES MAY BE SUCCESSFULLY EMPLOYED.

3. That the work of organization is but one part of our mission. Our missionaries watch over the schools, instructing Superintendents, encouraging teachers, and replenishing libraries. OUR SUNDAY-SCHOOLS VERY SELDOM DIE OUT.

FORM OF BEQUEST.

"*I give and bequeath to the American Sunday-School Union, established in the city of Philadelphia,* —— *dollars.*"

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The Children of the Kingdom.

"And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof."—ZECHARIAH viii. 5.

IT was a beautiful scene that rose on the sight of the prophet as he uttered these glowing predictions concerning Jerusalem. A time was surely coming in which the spectacle, hitherto so rare within those borders, should become familiar; old men sitting with their old wives waiting in the doorway, as the evening shadows fell over the slopes of the Mount of Olives, for the cheerful greeting of the labourers hurrying home from the field of their remunerated toil; children, undisturbed, gambolling with exuberant shouts in the roadways, and sporting with all the gladness of innocent glee, as the herds were driven in from the pastures of plenty. Alas!

how long had it been in Israel since the people had looked upon a vision like this!

War had swept away the middle multitudes from among them. The young men had gone to the army, or been slain out of its ranks. Maidens mourned their lovers, and dwelt homeless. Old men disappeared; children were few. Awful in its burden rested the weariness of wasting on the land. To speak of days such as these now predicted, was like the sound of flowing water falling, remembered in the distempered dreams of one dying of thirst in the desert, making desire almost delirious with delight.

Think of a whole nation, accustomed to pictures of pestilence, carnage and captivity, disciplined more than once under the ravages of gaunt famine and all the horrors of devastating and depopulating campaigns, in an unanticipated moment suddenly invited to look forward to a day of prosperity, and gain a glimpse of it, now, like some far-off landscape of peace!

But we cannot suffer the meaning of our text to exhaust itself upon the literal Israel. You are well aware that the predictions of prophecy, though meant many times to centre upon the life of the chosen people, sweep around into his-

tory at large, with outer circles of ever-widening scope. That Jerusalem of fact types the Jerusalem of a spiritual Zion, and that picture of joyous peace and plenty symbols the dear vision of New Testament prosperity. So the entire passage has a lesson for the Church returning from its world-long captivity, coming up from the wilderness leaning on the arm of the Beloved, occupying and possessing the land which God gave the fathers by promise, but which they have never received as yet for their inheritance, —no, not so much as to set foot on.

It is of this that we now conceive that ancient seer speaking, as he says, "There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age; and the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof."

Waiving all further notice of the earlier part of this prediction, I draw from the last verse of the two the thought on which I linger for present illustration, that one of the chief characteristics which will mark the final fruition of the Church at large, is to be the full provision made for the security of children.

I address you to-night, my Christian auditors and friends, in behalf of the AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION. And I wish no higher plane on which to plant my plea for it than this. It enters into the plan of prophecy as an instrument recognized and worthy in bringing about the end I have indicated. It cares for the little ones among the spiritual Israel. It assumes to act in their behalf. When the Saviour speaks ever to the lambs of his flock, saying to them, with a full apocalypse of promise and covenant love, "Surely I come quickly," it answers promptly in their name with all welcome and all prayer, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." We have other associations of the great and good to work for the conversion of the old men and the old women who are to dwell in the city whose maker and builder is God: this one has but a single modest aim, to be useful in making ready the boys and girls that are by-and-by to be seen playing in the streets thereof.

I. Yet even this I hold to be a lofty table-ground of honourable effort. And just there, with all its vantage of opportunity, I start with my argument. The SUBJECTS towards whom this Union directs its Christian charity and endeavour

commend it eminently to our confidence, co-operation and esteem.

For, remember, it has come now to be known that the highest evidence of advancement in civilization for any people, in any age or clime, is found in the care with which it cherishes its children. They are generally the least noticed, and the last noticed, of all classes of beings with souls. Never till a land has leisure, never till a nation has culture, never till most of the steps upward have been taken in the way towards the goal of exalted attainment, does there come even one look of appreciation or sympathy for any thing more than the mere necessities of these "feeble folk" of society. Up to that point all reference to children springs not from interest in children, but only from the interest of the community in itself. With all their heedlessness, men have generally wit enough to know that if they totally neglect the rising generations, they themselves will suffer most.

Christianity takes up children in its arms, as Christ did, for childhood's sake. We may mark the progress of history; we may profoundly probe for the motives of men, analyze conventional laws, rules and customs; we may search

all available records of nations: at last, we venture to say, from wide induction, we have learned the steps of progress for the race at large, leaving savagery and nearing civilization.

And perhaps most prominent among them we have been in our time wont to reckon the equalization of woman's lot, and the generous extension of privileges to the weaker sex. We pride ourselves upon our advancement in this respect. Few of this age can make it seem real that Socrates, with all his learning, all his intelligence, all his morality, positively sold his own wife at a price. So we are accustomed to say, let woman cease to be both a slave and a toy; give her her place in the social realm; let her become regnant as God made her regal; think of her always as that woman-poet bade Albert think of Victoria at her marriage :—

"Esteem that wedded hand less dear for sceptre than for ring,
And hold her uncrown'd womanhood to be the royal thing."

Then, when this is attained, we say the summit is attained and human advancement is at its culmination.

Not so; honour the sex that is noblest, and suddenly you discover there is that which the

honoured sex honours more than its own exaltation. Look up as you ought to look at woman, and you find woman looking upward still. With quicker intuition and clearer wisdom, she will teach you that "the child is father of the man." As a matter of fact, it can be shown that the more respected are our wives, unconsciously perhaps, but surely, the more faithful are they as mothers. And never till a people has reached its loftiest devotion of sentiment does it begin to respect children. And no test is so delicate by which to estimate piety, as this quick, earnest considerateness for the wants of those whom even our Saviour remembered, and gave into a care no less than that of the Presence Angels, the very spirits which do always behold the Father's face in heaven.

And hence he who, with kind heart and subtle ingenuity of invention, sits down at his desk to indite a volume with extraordinary cuts, or toils at his bench to construct a toy, for a little child, is, in one sense, both the product and the type of civilized manhood and of Christian cultivation. If he succeeds, he does a great and good thing.

The very prince of English poets, I believe

we are all agreed now, so far as advancement in the penetration of needs and skill in supplying them are concerned, is that venerable pastor of Stoke-Newington who, with no child of his own to prompt him, and never a wife to be its mother, wrote with supereminent wisdom his "Hymns for Infant Minds," which even mothers accepted at his hands, and children are yet singing, though generations have passed since his burial. It was a marvellous accomplishment. He won a greater triumph than he would had he written "Doddridge's Exposition" or preached "Whitefield's Sermons."

Within a few years we, in this land of light, have at the last come near enough to the Sun of righteousness to learn that he desires to shine most benignly upon children, and wants us to do as they do in some Eastern lands with infants,—hang them out at birth where the first ray of the morning may strike them. Our wealth has multiplied, our industry has been prospered, schools have increased, churches have grown,—all the steps upward we are taking with eminent rapidity. And now we at last begin to regard lovingly those whom Jesus loved the most. And, I say again, the highest proof of

our true Christian civilization is found just here. The last class to be noticed we have grown exalted enough now to seek.

And for this I commend with all cordiality the Association for which I speak. It is the instrumentality through which our loftiest spirituality, our truest advancement, our most active and vigorous piety, are permitted in Christian union to work. No other national society aims at the subjects it chooses. But for its efficiency, the land would mourn. And now, if some great catastrophe of nature were to bury us under, as a second Herculaneum or Pompeii, and the antiquarian of a far-future generation were to unearth our records, found, as they would be, in the market and the church, in the dwelling and in the street, in the metropolitan centres and the rural divergencies, all along and over the country, it would not be the proud arches of our architects, or the fine paintings of our artists; it would not be the princely mansions of our merchants, the thronged libraries, the crowded marts, the curious museums; it would not be the triumphs of our engineering skill, or the inventions of our mechanical ingenuity, nor even the gatherings of highest science in our

universities and schools,—not one, nor all, of these, would be the best evidence of our Christian advancement. Before not one of these would the wise and thoughtful men of that generation stand with half the wonder and half the admiring conviction with which they would linger before the unassuming edifices in each of our towns over whose doorways would be found the sign and the seal of this Union, "The Society that takes care of the Children."

II. In the second place, I am willing gladly to commend the American Sunday-School Union for the WORK it proposes explicitly to do. This is no less than to *seek out, educate* and *redeem* children.

Perhaps it may make you smile to think of seeking out children in a country like ours, where possibly there are more quivers and more arrows in each quiver than anywhere else in the known world. Children positively swarm wherever you go. The cities are crowded,—the unhealthiest neighbourhoods and the unlikeliest and unfittest households, generally, the most so. And the villages, likewise, are thronged. Seek sylvan solitudes at will, and you will find a boy at the silentest brook-side with his hook

and line, and a girl with her basket for wild flowers in the loneliest pasture. May the day never come when they shall be less! "Happy is the people that is in such a case!"

But this involves new responsibility. Half these children die before five years of age. Not far from one in seven is buried before it ever sees its anniversary birthday. What a waste, if God sends them only as he sends the great tree-loads of spring blossoms for the comparatively little fruit! But he does not. He cares for the least of them, though he gives the living multitude to the world with all munificence of profusion. Some he takes home early, and teaches. Some he leaves here, and says to you and me, Take these to your homes and teach them for me. Patiently these little ones must be sought out and brought under the power of the gospel. They never will be till Christians become Christ-like. Brazilian rivers are full of diamonds. What then? They will only drift down the current and be lost in the sands, unless somebody goes to crown-making. Piety is meant to prompt to devotion; but the devotion of many a child of God is unintelligent, weak and inef-

ficient; and that man may be sure his jewels will be few.

The Sunday-School Union accepts this charge. It has no strength to sit still. While I speak, its agencies are threading their way through the avenues of cities, and along the paths of unvisited hamlets, gathering in children to the fold-life of Christ. I warrant you there is an appointment this very evening in a score of neighbourhoods. A half-hour ago a man, possibly rough with exposure, certainly a hard-working toiler in the cause, began his speech in a log school-house. He is talking now, as I am, of the advantages of instruction for children. He is showing his audience the books, and explaining how the enterprise may be undertaken. He will be sure to have the school organized before he has done with them. You may think all this is simple and uninteresting. It certainly is; but it is the beginning of great good. You might have thought Hannah's visit to Eli of no account; but after-events proved that she offered that day a prophet unto God!

This being the way in which the work is conducted all over the land, you perceive at once how it supplements and encourages the entire

activities of the Church of Christ. If it finds another agency out in this vast field, it offers its hand on the instant. What work is there that can be named to which a vigorous Sabbath-school is not a friend on the instant, and a most welcome and efficient ally? Take the Bible cause, for example. Where would an agent go more quickly in his effort at circulating the Scriptures than to a neighbourhood with a good organization, meeting weekly for their study? Ask the Domestic Missionary Societies if this Union does not give them men and money. It finds now and then a feeble church, and almost always it sets the congregation on its feet again. You ask for students to go to college, and for young men to become ministers, and for women to become teachers of the heathen. The Sunday-school finds them out among the hills, and sets them on the way, awakens their ambition, and directs their steps, so that your ranks are filled with the noblest volunteers. No branch of the great work of God's people can be found which this does not help.

Why should it not help every thing else? It has no personal end to serve. The Union has not a single selfish aim of its own. What can

it have? Financial success in its sale of libraries, perhaps.

Not at all. Surely you all know that the publishing department is perfectly independent. No contribution ever goes to it. It makes its volumes, binds them, sells them, packs them, all without charge on its benevolent funds. It lives just like any other issuing agency. Its books are as cheap as any others in the market; and it asks no favours, and presses no sales.

The only other selfish aim it can be suspected to have is a denominational bias. But no one urges this: *it is the only real Union that is in the country.* Bible societies divide over versions; mission societies, over political issues. Amid all the harassments of the last five years, civil and sectarian, one quiet haven of peace there has been for the soul to put into before the wind. No strife has found its way within the enclosure where the children sit at the feet of Jesus. All agitating issues end here. Polemics and belligerents lay aside their armour, and learn war no more, when they come to a Sunday-school. The wolf dwells with the lamb, and the leopard lies down with the kid, and the calf and the young

lion and the fatling together; and it is only a little child that leads them.

And I appeal to you, my brethren, men of charity and candour, is it not well to keep one spot free from strife in all the world of conflict and difference? I, for one, may be very sorry that the Union that circulates so much reading never prints my peculiar views on the perseverance of the saints; yet I do not see how it can while it remains a Union. But, then, can I not take home great comfort to my soul as I remember, at all events, it never undertakes to argue for falling from grace? I have a good friend, who, doubtless, wishes it would now and then put in a plea for much water, and describe with particulars an incident so edifying as that about the Ethiopian eunuch; but he is quite clear it cannot do that now. But then he is fain to be not a little jubilant over the thought that, though it may labour long for the conversion of children, it does not presume to baptize any.

What, then, does the Union propose to do with this wide-spread effort of energy and zeal for the Churches? Let me try to show you clearly

Did you never find yourself, when singing in a great congregation, suddenly joined by some

quiet stranger behind you, a deep full bass or a sweet flexible tenor, touching your own note, or one quite in tune with it, gently and sympathetically, so that you were very certain on the instant that it was a Christian and a musician who did it, and then together you sustained the sacred song on through grandly to its end? You were confident you never sang so well before in all your life, yet surely you never sang so independently. For once in the tune there came a passage at which you thought you could attempt a quaver, one that always had been a sort of pride of yours in execution, and then it halted, —that voice of help,—waited respectfully a moment till you subsided into the regular strain, then went on with you again.

This is precisely what the Sunday-School Union seeks to do, in all simplicity and self-abnegation, for the Church, for the causes, and for the sects. It strikes in on the same note, or one just in the chord with it, and tries modestly to swell the song of devotion that rises to the one God over all. If anybody wants to make a private flourish, it will wait for him, in all charity, with no interference. It desires for itself only to keep around among the deep harmonies of the

great evangelical faith, and help in the anthem that any Christian can sing.

But I have said that this work of the association includes not only the seeking out of children, but their education. Come with me to an efficient Sunday-school, and look in upon it just at the moment when the recitations are in progress. Inquire out the teachers in turn. Who are they? Any pastor or superintendent is competent to inform you. The force, the zeal, the real piety of the entire Church is there. God has wonderfully quickened the hearts of true Christians in this direction. The chief lesson of the last mighty revival in the land was that concerning the power of individual effort among the lay membership. Forth into the Sunday-school it now presses itself. I mean no words of weak compliment when I say I know I am this very evening addressing one of the most august audiences this great city can furnish. The teachers and friends of Sabbath-schools are the worth and the workers now among God's people, wherever you find them.

Couple with this fact, moreover, another consideration concerning the lesson that is taught. What are the instructors in this school, in upon

which we are looking, attempting with such apparent interest to communicate? You know full well that the questions which pass between them for answer and study are those that concern the deepest needs and loftiest aspirations of the human soul. The tremendous problems of sin and salvation are the staple of close converse. If you draw nigh enough, you will hear the story of the cross told over and over again, now by the parable, now by the history, now by the type. What a school is this for stimulating thought, with such teachers and such themes! How the intelligence is awakened, how the mind is educated—educed, drawn out—into the exercise of its best powers!

Add to all this, yet further, the spirit with which this work is done. Mark one peculiarity in attitude. The pupil, in the intensity of his interest, has leaned forward from the bench, and the instructor, in the absorption of his subject, has bent forward from the chair; and the foreheads almost touch each other. We, who are a little enthusiastic in these matters, call that characteristic posture the "Sunday-school arch." You never find it except at the seats of the best teachers, the most intelligent, the most faithful.

Remember that they have studied that lesson most carefully, and that their whole hearts are in the duty they are doing. Remember, they have wrestled in earnest prayer on bended knees before their Lord that morning, pleading for help in it. Then bear in mind that their pupils love them, honour them, and now listen with all the inquisitiveness of kindled ambition to learn something new and fresh. And the eyes fill sometimes with the suffusion of tender appeal and affectionate exhortation. Look at all this thoughtfully. Ah, what an arch is this under which to put a child! It is not an unfitting or unworthy symbol of God's own bow of covenant promise, bending over this young immortal with its benediction of peace. Keep a child there for a term of years. Let him grow up under it. Let that little young form become manlier and straighten somewhat perforce, and that other mature form that once bent with eagerness now begin to stoop with age, and still let that patient process be continued, and never relax, till the place is changed, and the pupil begins with a child in his turn and makes a new arch of his own: what will the result of this pressure be? Go ask your church records what it will be; read

the names of those who come from the Sabbath-school into the church.

Moreover, with all this, keep in mind the instrument which is employed. What is the text-book they have in hand? The Bible alone. How the multitudinous appliances for help in Sabbath-school teaching have increased during the last few years! and yet all of them are only intended to magnify and explain the Bible. The maps, the dictionaries, the plans, the models, the commentaries, all bearing on the word of God, only to make it clearer and more forcible. Hence the augmented power of a Sunday-school teacher. The truth that he brings to bear upon the understanding and the heart of those committed to his charge, is immediately authenticated and accompanied by a vital force from heaven itself. His arguments for every thing honest, pure, and of good report, are not drawn from considerations of mere human expediency, but from direct revelation of the will of God. Hence, while they have all the convincing and convicting irresistibleness that any others could have, they have also an inherent liveliness and energy peculiarly their own, as being divine.

I have heard once of a blow struck by a stu-

dent in a laboratory upon the head of an intruder that attacked him: seeing ordinary defences were insufficient, he seized a charged Leyden jar and hurled it with full force at the forehead that defied him. Of course it had all the power that any other ball of brass would have had, and then all the added power of the lightning that filled it.

A symbol this of the truth drawn from the word of God. It has all the impressiveness in both form and substance that any other truth has, and then, beyond this, all the stupendous force of the inspiration with which it has been charged.

Put all these instrumentalities together, now, and are you not ready to exclaim with me again, What a school for a child! And yet the work of the Sunday-School Union does not end here. I have said, also, that it must *redeem* those whom it seeks and educates. Conversion, through the blood of the atonement, is the aim in the case of each individual member of the classes. Drop all this sentimental talk about the innocence and purity of children. They are to be delivered from sins like the rest of us. Remember that the only argument which our Saviour himself used for all his tenderness in their behalf

was simply this: "The Son of man came to seek that which was lost." Never can we rest till each child has found its way to the cross and is forgiven of sin. All the other work is only preparation for this. The life is to be redeemed and set on in its path towards God.

A life,—what is it? A child's life,—how insignificant! Yet look a moment at results. I see a feeble, wailing infant, lying out in the Nile, among the reeds on the shore, in an ark of bulrushes. It is a life even more exposed than usual, on the water drifting,—a little life, a despised life; is it worth the saving? God thinks so, and sends a king's daughter that way. His providence interposes, and the infant is saved. I wait forty years, and I see that life again. Now it is in the royal palace, educated and grown to manly maturity. Fire is in the eye, grace in every limb; and through the entire frame I behold quivering and agitating the sinewy members, that quick instinct of vitality which marks power among men. The noble manhood turns its back with a peerless refusal on the daughter of Pharaoh, and goes forth to desert-experiences. Forty years more pass on, and I see that life once more. The rod of God is in the leader's

hand, and miracles are falling from the sweep of it. The rocks rend, the seas divide, at the touch. I watch forty years more, through a cycle of admiring reverence, and I am startled to find now that life going up into a lonely mountain to die, with natural force yet unabated, and with eye not yet grown dim. And so it is gone. And I moralize on the efficiency and the greatness of those hundred and twenty years. Fifteen centuries are in their flight; when, suddenly, I see that life reappearing on another mountain, grander than ever. It is in existence even then. Eighteen hundred years more have now passed away, and I am certain that no end has come to it yet. Some of us will see that life face to face before a century more. It will never end. The sun will; the stars will; the earth will. But that life will still shine on in the glory to which it returned from its transfiguration visit to Tabor. And yet that was the little life that lay exposed in the sedge of the Nile! He that wailed in the ark of bulrushes is now singing beside the ark of the covenant in the sanctuary of God!

Men and brethren, the Sunday-School Union stands quietly watching while you come down

to the water, to know whether you will hear the cries of children that yet wail for help, and will say, in your wealth and your power, as one said to Miriam's mother, "Take this child and nurse it for me; I will give thee thy wages."

III. I have spoken of the subjects of religious effort which the Association for which I plead has chosen, and of the work in detail that it proposes to do for them. I had laid out in my general plan, as a third ground of commendation, the FIELD which it occupies,—our own suffering, distracted land. But I cannot trust myself to go further. I must not tax your patience with any attempt at adequate development of the point.

There comes to me, however, less of regret on this account, now that my time is quite exhausted, because I know there is no need of more than a mere mention of our country's name and peril to stir the depths of our patriotism on the instant.

One little verse of Robert Burns there is, that occurs to me just here, that has moved me much in even cooler and calmer days than these;—he is speaking of his native land:—

A wish I had,—"I mind its power,—
A wish that to my latest hour
Shall strongly heave my breast;
That I, for poor auld Scotland's sake,
Some usefu' plan or book could make,
Or sing a sang at least."

In these times, when every heart is agitated, such words as these stir the inner fountains of feeling, and their wistfulness swells our own souls to fulness. And just there I am led to think of this grand old society, under whose Sunday-school banner I stand proudly to-night, and I am tempted to leave my plea with the mere asking, Where are the "useful plans" that can rival these I have sketched? Where are the "books" better than the libraries it circulates? Where are the "songs," which even the soldiers sing, when they are fighting or dying, with half the zeal with which they ring out the melodies that it teaches?

O my brethren, I think of ourselves here to-night, in the midst of all the quiet and delight of the sanctuary, and then I picture our armies that are forth in the field, amid the tumultuous agitations of war. How the great heart of the nation almost breaks under the multiplied sor-

rows! And yet we are so secure, and our homes and hearts are so happy, here!

Shall this burden lie over us forever? Oh, no! The vision of the prophet shall surely be the vision of our land. I shall live to see it; and that right early. So I have faith to believe. I shall see these streets filled with matrons in their gladness, and children in their glee. I shall hear the announcement of "peace, peace," flying from one lip to another. And the lights will gleam in every willing window, and the bells will peal in every joyous tower. The hills will roar with cannon, and the ways will resound with music. And then the martial bands will come home again. Feeble forms will be straight; scarred limbs will be honourable. Camp-worn, field-worn features will glisten with the welcome they will get. Waving hands, and cheering shouts, and smiling faces will render the very air tremulous and alive with delight.

And away over the mountains and along the valleys will speed that ery of peace upon the wings of the wind. Then will the bereaved sire lift his heart, sonless, unto heaven, murmuring, with not a tear in his eye, "One less voice in my home; but one more nation unto God!"

All this I shall see with my eyes, and not another's. Then the people will return to their firesides, and all the works of thrift will go on. Then "there shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age; and the streets shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof." And when this day comes, my countrymen, you will learn and acknowledge two things which you would not deem it modest for me to state here to-night.

You will learn how much the nation owes to the teachers and scholars this Union has brought you for the army and the navy. When the names shall be read on the silent graves near Antietam, and Shiloh, and Murfreesborough, and Fredericksburg, at Donelson, and Hatteras, and Henry; oh, I bide my time waiting to hear you say, "The best soldiers of our country were the boys that sang,—

'Oh, do not be discouraged,'

in the Sunday-school classes!"

And the other thing you will learn is, that the lessons taught to these pupils were the moving principles of their lives, and the con-

soling helps to their faith when they died out under the stars, on the lonely night after the conflicts. Patriotism purer and more devoted never was breathed than that under the force of which they grew. Love of country and love of God together have been the fire that has flamed on the very altar under the Sunday-school arch. And the truth taught these millions of scholars has found its way through the communities. I say again, I bide my time, waiting to hear you acknowledge, with all thanksgiving to the miraculous power of the Spirit that made it so, "It has been the loaves and fishes of a little lad that has fed the five thousand!"

THE END.

CONCLUSIVE TESTIMONY.

Rev. Stephen H. Tyng, D.D., Episcopal.

This Union, I am persuaded, has done more towards correcting and sanctifying the juvenile reading of our country, and towards furnishing healthful and useful books for the minds of our children, than all other persons whatsoever combined. It is a precious gift of God to our country, and claims for its enlargement and support the united efforts of Christians of every name.

Rev. J. T. Crane, D.D., Methodist.

When I see the thousands of Bible schools established, where there could be none except on the Union plan, the congregations gathered, the books disseminated, the souls saved, I bless God for the American Sunday-School Union.

Rev. Wm. R. Williams, D.D., Baptist.

The Union missionary labonrs of the American Sunday-School Union, in the erection of new schools in our new and more sparsely-settled regions, seem to me full of the richest promise, and meet a crying need. God has largely blessed them.

Rev. Albert Barnes, N. S. Presbyterian.

The Union principle is the only one on which this work can be most successfully prosecuted, especially among the sparsely settled and greatly divided inhabitants of the new frontier States.

Rev. R. S. Storrs, D.D., Congregational.

I hesitate not to say that I am yet ignoraut of the institution which operates at once so silently and with equal power to bring about the great moral revolution of our country, for which every patriotic heart and every tongne of hallowed fire send forth their devoutest aspirations. Happy were it for Zion were the objects of the American Sunday-School Union better understood and its principles more fully appreciated, for its means aud results could not then fail of indefinite enlargement.

Rev. S. S. Smucker, D.D., Lutheran.

The Sabbath-School system, when faithfully carried ont according to the principles of the American Snnday-School Union, may be characterized as giving prominence to the Bible, as being free from sectarianism, as reaching the entire population, as employing also lay agency, and as beginning with the earliest age.

Rev. Isaac Ferris, D.D., Chancellor New York University.

The American Sunday-School Union is the channel through which the work intended to benefit the children of our country can best be carried on. Denominational effort has its place, but it cannot reach the case.

Rev. Charles Hodge, D.D., Professor in Princeton Theological Seminary.

It is the very object of this Institution to do what has so long and so lamentably been neglected; to bring the light of divine truth to bear upon the opening minds of children.

Rev. J. W. Alexander, D.D.

It is our fault that the American Sunday-School Union has not carried Christian education to every corner of our land. It is, next to the preaching of the Word, the most available instrument for evangelizing the country. It is cheap, simple, energetic, flexible. It adapts itself to all states of society. It penetrates where the preacher has not yet come, opens through the forest a path for the Bible and the tract, and establishes its outposts in the utmost verge of civilization; and this it does in its distinctive character as a *Catholic Union of Christians.*

OUR MISSIONARY WORK.

The American Sunday-School Union is the only NATIONAL MISSIONARY SOCIETY having a special mission to the neglected children of our country.

The Missionary Department is ENTIRELY DISTINCT from the Book Department, and is wholly dependent on Christian benevolence. Its design is to send missionaries, clerical and lay, into destitute districts, to "*organize Sabbath-schools wherever there is a population.*"

A Great Work to be Done.

There are 2,000,000 of adult whites in our country who cannot read or write. Between the ages of 5 and 15 years, there are *four and a half millions* of children in our land who are growing up with no religious instruction. In no one of our Eastern States, even, are *one-half* of the children in the Sunday-school; and in some Western States *three-fourths* of the children and youth are not only ungathered into Sabbath-schools, but large numbers are beyond the reach of any established church.

Our Plan of Operations.

We lay out our field in districts of from five to ten counties each. Into each of these, so far as able, we place a *permanent* missionary. He canvasses his field systematically, district by district, gathering not only the children into Sabbath-schools, but reaching the adults and forming them into Bible classes. He enlists thousands of Christian men and women as teachers, who, living remote from churches, are thus called upon to do the work of evangelists. He secures the *permanency* of the schools by correspondence with them and occasional visits and assistance. Ordinarily, a missionary will organize from 30 to 50 schools in a year, enlisting the services of from 200 to 300 teachers and gathering in from 1200 to 2000 children.

Our Great Want.

The great want of the Society, next to the blessing of God, is *money* to carry forward this great mission work,—MONEY TO PAY THE SALARIES OF MISSIONARIES, AND TO SUPPLY POOR AND NEEDY SCHOOLS WITH BOOKS GRATUITOUSLY WHEN NECESSARY.

Our great field is not half supplied with labourers. Faithful missionaries stand ready to accept their commission and enter upon this service. We are entirely dependent upon benevolent contributions, and can do only so much as our friends, by their gifts, shall authorize. How many persons could send us $100, $300, $500, with but little, if any, inconvenience! Give us the means, and we will plant a Sabbath-school in every neighbourhood in our land.

Special Contributions.

A contribution of FOUR HUNDRED DOLLARS will enable the Society to employ a *permanent* missionary.

THIRTY DOLLARS constitutes a Life Member.

TWELVE DOLLARS will supply a new Sabbath-school with *One Hundred Volumes* of the Society's publications.

Remittances of Money.

Donations may be forwarded to LEVI KNOWLES, Treasurer, 1122 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia.

Missionary Correspondence.

Persons desiring information concerning the Missionary Department should address

M. A. WURTS, *Secretary of Missions,*
1122 *Chestnut St., Philadelphia.*

REV. J. H. BURTIS, *Associate Secretary,*
599 *Broadway, New York.*